

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Oceano Dunes Visitors Facing Stiffer Penalties For Staying Past Regular Day Use Hours

OCEANO -- California State Park officials announced today that day use visitors who remain in Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area with their motor vehicles and who camp illegally past the 11 p.m. day use closure are subject to citation and a \$270 fine.

Park officials expect capacity crowds at the popular Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area for the long July 4th holiday. Beginning Wednesday, July 3rd, the camping area is fully reserved through the entire weekend. Visitors may enter the park without camping reservations for day use only, but they *must* exit the park by 11 p.m. each day.

"We absolutely will not tolerate violators who think they can take advantage of the situation and stay without making reservations," said California State Parks Deputy Director David L. Widell of the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division.

California State Park officials are hopeful that increasing the penalty from \$64 to \$270 for violation of posted use periods and illegal camping will help improve the quality of the recreational experience for the thousands of park visitors who pay to camp, and reduce the impact on park facilities and sensitive coastal resources.

Park visitors are reminded that all fireworks, including "safe and sane fireworks," are prohibited on the beach and in the park. The City of Pismo Beach sponsors a professional fireworks display on July 4th that is visible from most points along Oceano Dunes. The beach area usually reaches capacity by 6 p.m. Plan to arrive early to avoid being turned away at the gate.

State Parks has an ongoing education program in effect year-round at Oceano Dunes. Each visitor is given a brochure reminding them that their future access to the park depends on their responsible behavior and strict adherence to laws and park policies. In addition, a large trash bag is given to each visitor to encourage everyone to participate in the "Pack it in, Pack it out" program. Rangers rigorously enforce the 15 MPH vehicle speed limit on the beach, as well

as kite flying and dogs on leash laws to ensure those visitor activities do not disturb sensitive species that inhabit the area. Kite flying is permitted only on the beach north of the Pier Avenue beach ramp.

Oceano Dunes is one of California's most popular State Parks, attracting more than 1.2 million visitors annually—more than the famed Hearst Castle®— who come to the park to fish, surf, beachcomb, ride horses, view wildlife, and enjoy off-highway vehicle recreation. Oceano Dunes represents the last 5-½ miles of beach along California's 1,100 miles of coastline where motorized recreation is still allowed.

Further information may be obtained by contacting Oceano Dunes SVRA at (805) 473-7230.

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